

## HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

## IDENTIFICATION

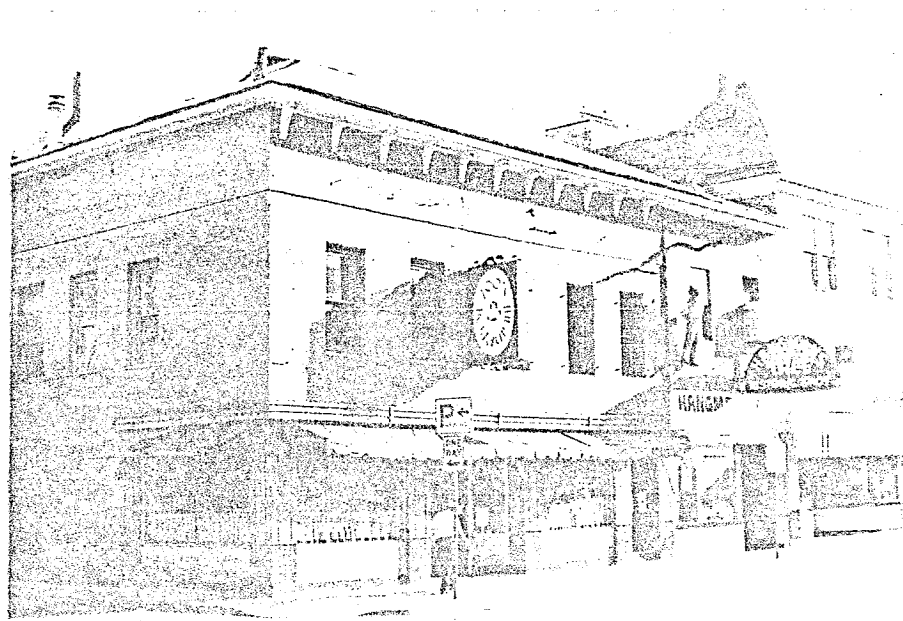
1. Common name: Hangman's Tree and Zoe's Restaurant
2. Historic name: Binswanger's Fruit Store; Herrick and Bonsteel's Brick (Placer Hotel)
3. Street or rural address: 305 Main Street  
City: Placerville, California Zip: 95667 County: El Dorado
4. Parcel Number: 61-212-61 (Lots 14 and 15, Block 39)
5. Present Owner: Ronald C. and Anna J. Nunan, Etal Address: 2831 Greenwich Street  
City: San Francisco, California Zip: 94123 Ownership is:
6. Present Use: Restaurant/Bar Original Use: Fruit Store/Hotel

## DESCRIPTION

- 7a. Architectural Style:
- 7b. Briefly describe the present physical description of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition:

Zoe's Restaurant and the Hangman's Tree Bar share a common wall on the ground floor, the buildings are connected on the top floor. This is a rectangular stretcher bond brick building situated on the north side of Main street in the City of Placerville, and is the first of a series of buildings in a row known as the "Plaza Strip". The west portion (Lot 14) is a wooden frame building sharing a common wall with the building on lot 15. The building is two story with a medium gable metal roof (shared with Lot 15). The front has a stucco upper story with two matching wooden windows. The lower story has tile sheathing, plate glass windows and wood and glass french double hung doors. The rear is wood with two windows on the upper story and one door below on the ground floor, and one metal chimney. The building situated on Lot 15 is a two story brick with a shallow gable, metal roof. The Main Street side has a painted brick upper story with five matching equally spaced windows. The lower floor is tile over brick with plate glass windows and wood and glass french doors under a cloth awning. The Center Street side is painted brick with seven windows on the upper floor and two windows and one door on the ground floor. The rear of the building is painted brick with four windows on the upper story and two windows and a door on the ground floor.

8. Construction date: Estimated: Before 1855
9. Architect:
10. Builder:
11. Approximate property size (in feet) Frontage: 57.7' Depth: 60.2
12. Date(s) of enclosed photograph(s): 1983, 1984



13. Condition: Deteriorating
14. Alterations: Removal of the slipsills from under the windows and the bracketed hoods over the windows on the top floor. Removal of the brackets under the roof on the building on lot 14.
15. Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary) Commercial
16. Threats to site: Vibrations from traffic on Coloma, Center and Main Streets. The building on Lot 15 is in poor condition due to years of neglect.
17. Is the structure: On its original site? Yes.
18. Related features: Some of the original canvass sheeting is still visible in the upstairs between the two buildings.
17. Is the structure: On its original

## SIGNIFICANCE

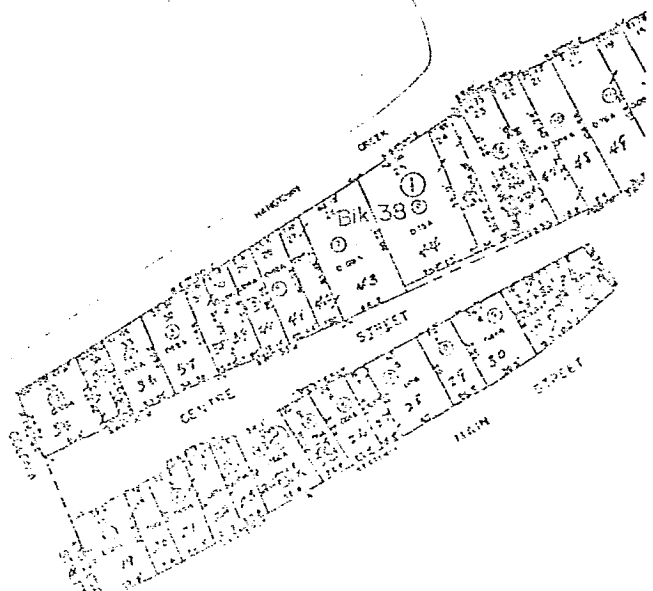
19. Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site.)

From all current records, this building appears to have been built prior to 1855 (possibly 1852), and is one of the few buildings in Placerville to have survived the July 1856 fire. This building, and the building on Lot 1 of Block 39, are keystones for the block. The block consisting of a series of five wooden buildings, and 10 brick buildings, is connected by a series of common walls. The Herrick and Bonsteel Brick, as the building on Lot 15 is known, is one of the oldest buildings still standing in Placerville. The walls are beginning to show cracks, and the mortar is like a fine powder. The outside of the bricks are better preserved than in some areas of the interior—mainly because they have been painted over the years. Along the building on the Coloma and Center Street sides, are placed handcast, forged, "S" shaped irons were placed in the building to add stability. It is possible these "S" irons were forged at the Morey Foundry located a short distance from the building. The wooden building on Lot 14 had to be rebuilt after the 1856 fire, and has served as a bar or cigar store as well as a restaurant for many years. According to a registry of Historical Points of Interest, the "Hangman's Tree" used during 1849, and contributing the name "Hangtown," was located on this lot (14). According to the operators of the Hangman's Tree Bar, the stump of the old tree is still under the floor of the building.

20. Main theme of the historic resource: (If more than one is checked, number in order of importance.)
  1. Economic/Industrial
  2. Exploration/Settlement
  3. Social/Education
21. Sources (List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews and their dates.)
  1. SIOLI, Paolo. History of El Dorado County, Oakland, 1883
  2. DECAIR, Jim and Ruby; Interview, Placerville, California 1983.
  3. Mountain Democrat (newspaper), Placerville, El Dorado County, California
  4. El Dorado County Recorder's Office, Placerville, California. Official Records
  5. Application for Registration of Historical Point of Interest. California State Department of Parks of Parks and Recreation, submitted by, H. E. Dillinger, September 20, 1933.
22. Date form prepared: 30 May 1984
 

By (name): Charles Stephens, Betty C. Laarveld  
 Organization: City of Placerville Historic Advisory Committee  
 Address: 487 Main Street  
 City: Placerville, California Zip: 95667  
 Phone: City Hall 622-9353; Laarveld 622-9434

BLOCK 39, BLOCK 38—LOTS 14 TO 35  
CITY OF PLACERVILLE



APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION OF HISTORICAL POINT OF INTEREST

NAME OF HISTORICAL POINT Site of Hangman's Tree - Placerville (Hangtown)  
California

LOCATION Beneath the floor of building at No. 307 Main St.,  
Placerville

NAME OF OWNER J. A. Sigwart, Washington St., Placerville, Calif.

Street

City

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

Historic Hangtown, now known as Placerville, came by the name of Hangtown because two Frenchmen and a Chileno, who were hanged on this tree in 1850. The spot was then known as Elstner's Hay or Feed Yard, the building now on the spot having been erected some years later. The names of the three men were probably never known. They had been charged with robbery and had been apprehended by the Vigilantes, who had been organized about that time, and while their fate was being debated, a constable arrived from Calaveras County, saying they were wanted there for robbery and attempted murder, and that fact sealed their fate.

One or two subsequent hangings took place, either here or near where the Episcopal Church now stands, a short distance up Coloma Street, but no public hangings occurred after 1850. For a number of years the Vigilantes continued to dispense rough and ready justice to such good purpose that the community remained a very law abiding one, notwithstanding the frontier conditions and absence of regular law enforcement machinery.

The name of the town was changed to Placerville in the early Fifties.

REFERENCES TO BOOKS, RECORDS AND OTHER AUTHORITIES SUSTAINING THESE FACTS

These statements are in accordance with facts stated in "History of El Dorado County" by Charles Elmer Upton, also, by Will C. Upton, brother of Charles Elmer Upton, who is also author of many historical articles on El Dorado County. Mr Will Upton states that he was told on several occasions by Misses Tillie and (as well as by others) Harry O'Donnell, pioneer residents of the city, who were well acquainted with the location, that the tree stood on this lot, about two-thirds of the way back toward Center Street. (Mrs. W. F. Fairchild, who has also written and compiled considerable El Dorado County history, also corroborates the statements made herein, particularly as to location of the tree. Many others also testify to the correctness of the above statements, although a few have expressed the belief that the tree stood on the corner of Main and Colusa Sts., where the brick building now stands. That however, does not seem likely, besides the overwhelming weight of the evidence is against that theory.

ARE PICTURES ATTACHED? Yes

IS STATEMENT OF OWNER ATTACHED? Yes  
History and Landmarks Committee of the  
El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce.

SIGNED H. E. Dillinger Chairman

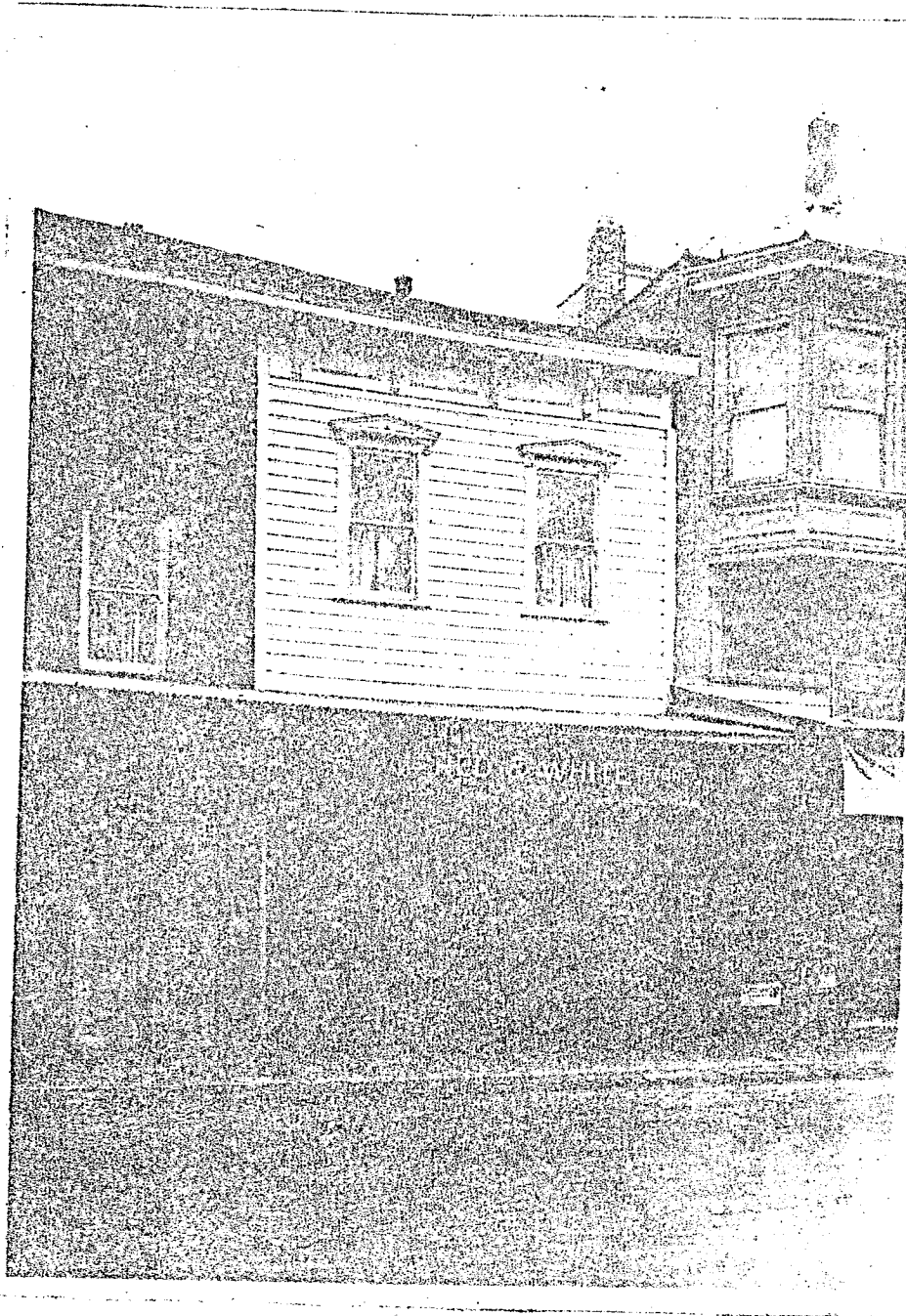
CITY Placerville, Calif

COUNTY El Dorado County, Calif.

DATE September 20, 1955

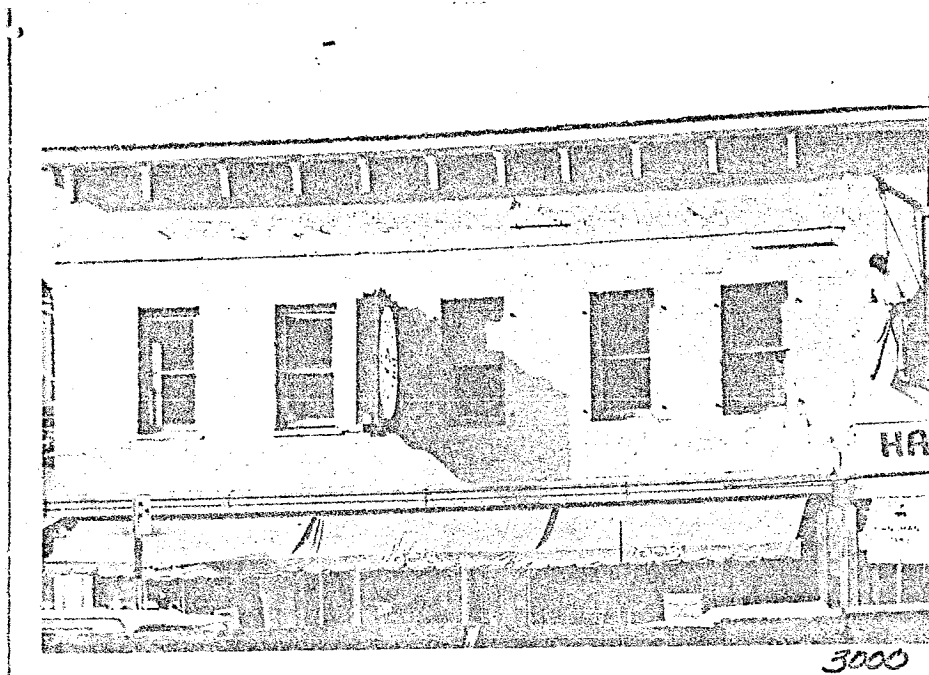
(This form when filled out completely is to be sent to the Official Approval Committee, care of the California State Chamber of Commerce, Ferry Building, San Francisco)

PHOTOGRAPHS

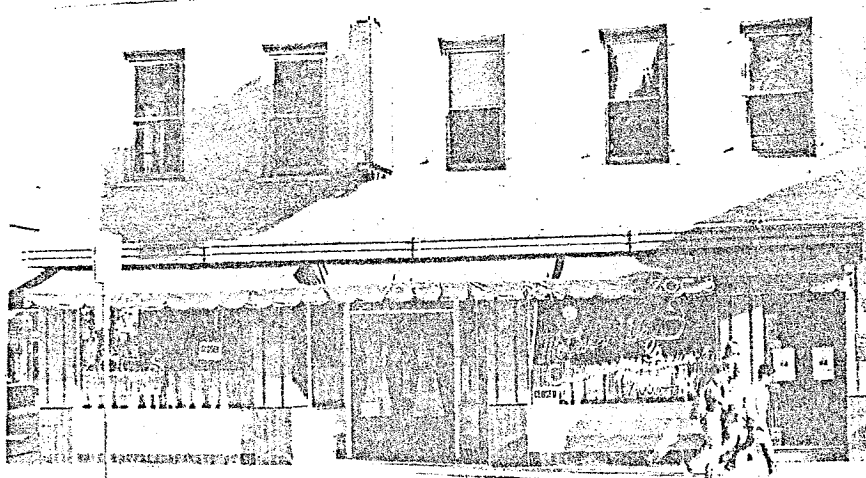




Betty C. Laarveld Photograph. 1984. West side of Zoe's (Herrick-Bonsteel's) Brick



Betty C. Laarveld Photograph, 1984. Showing upper floor of Herrick-Bonsteel's Brick



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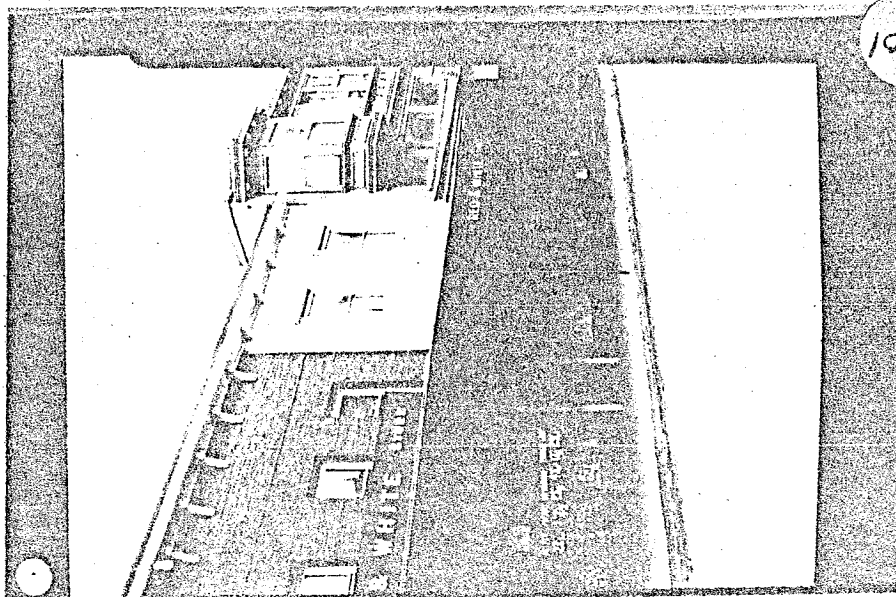
Betty C. Laarveld Photograph, 1984. Lower floor of Herrick-Bonsteel's Brick



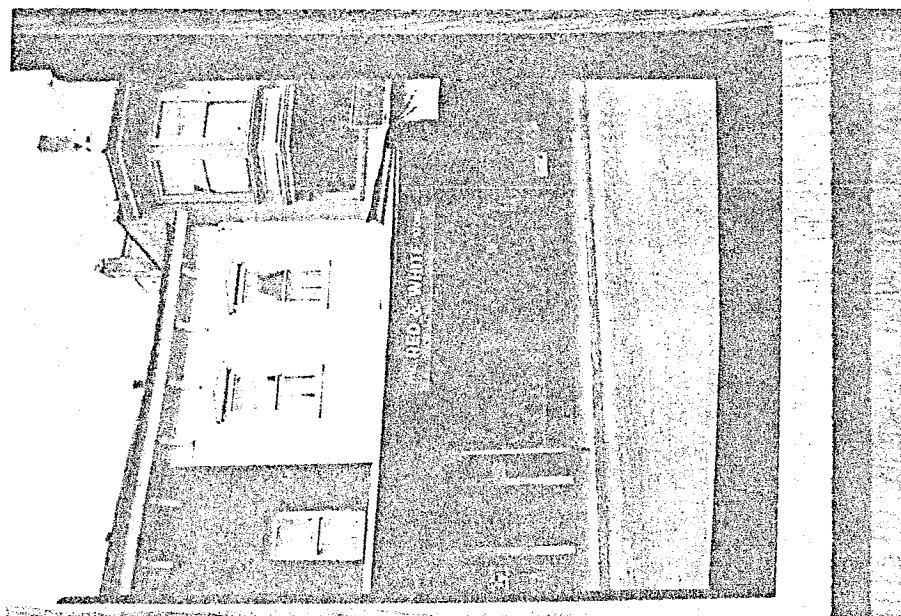
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Betty C. Laarveld Photograph, 1984.

Photographs Courtesy: El Dorado County Historical Museum

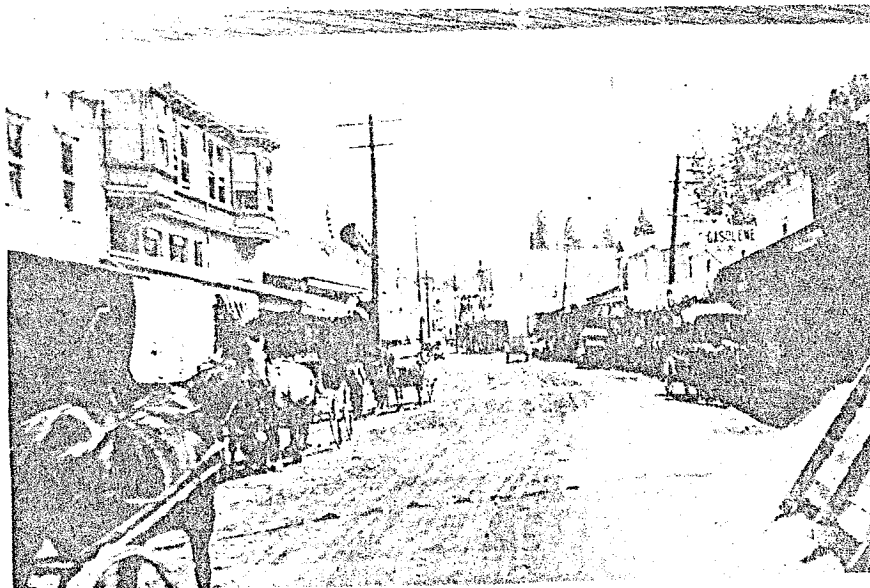


3301



3315





3242 + 3243

Photograph Courtesy, El Dorado County Historical Museum. California State Library